

# Oak Middle School Happenings

SHREWSBURY



## "Respect is Our Cornerstone"

January 2005

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### **Principals' Corner**

Dear Parents,

The tragedy of the Tsunami disaster, expansion into additional instructional space and maintaining a learning centered school environment have been our primary focal points during the month of January.

Students and teachers from 7 Blue in partnership with ELNA (Education Leadership for a Non-Violent Age) students have co-sponsored a school-wide contest providing Oak students with an opportunity to contribute pennies "and more" to our Tsunami Relief Fund. This enterprise had been supplemented by other student initiatives to help those impacted by this disaster. The staffs of Sherwood and Oak Middle Schools will entertain the community with a Volleyball Game  
*(continued on page 2)*

### **PTO President's Corner**

With about half of the school year completed, I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of the programs and resources the PTO has been able to provide to our Middle Schools so far. These have been made possible by every family's active involvement in fundraising and social events.

The PTO was able to fund annual magazine subscriptions for all grades. Grade 5 receive a Scholastic Newsletter subscription, Grade 6 receives Newsbowl USA, Grade 7 receives Junior Scholastic, and Grade 8 receives Upfront Scholastic. Through the recommendation and coordination efforts of the school curriculum specialists, these subscriptions were chosen to enhance the Middle School curriculum.  
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***(Principals' Corner, continued from page 1)***

this Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Oak Middle School Gym with all proceeds dedicated to the Relief Fund. Please take note of the related flyer in this Monday's folder. The caring for those impacted by this disaster by our students provides a unique opportunity to serve the world community so much time we spend so much time learning about.

On the instructional space front, the good news continues to come our way. The access to the gymnasium upon our return from the holidays has since allowed us to play host for three home basketball games as well as provide art and music classes in the rooms designated for these purposes. We now fully expect that all teachers and all programs will be in their final locations by the time you read this – including the auditorium.

Several learning focused accomplishments should be noted as well. Please take note of students who have distinguished themselves for academic accomplishments in the "Students Shine" portion of this newsletter. In addition our seventh grade teachers of mathematics have completed a departmental pre-assessment of all students' math skills that will be used to guide collective and individual student points of instructional emphasis during the second half of the school year as well as help determine instructional level decisions for the school year ahead. Last week our after school "Learning How to Learn" tuition based program focusing on "test taking skills, learning strategies, some tutoring in Math and Language Arts and developing good study habits" generated such a strong response that additional sections have been created to respond to the interest expressed. In addition, shortly after the February vacation, up to eight students from the eighth grade will be mentored by trained volunteers from Fidelity Investments and OMS teachers to help improve their MCAS mathematics skills.

I would like to call your attention to the "National Inhalant Prevention Coalition" information attached to this issue of the Happenings. A concerned 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent phone

call received by one of our counselors a few days ago has served as an important reminder of the health risk behaviors that sometimes accompany early adolescence. We, along with our health educators, counselors and School Nurse thought it important to provide you with this information. In the school weeks ahead, we will provide comparable information to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in regularly scheduled physical education classes as well as provide a related parent forum.

We also want to call your attention to the enclosed attendance and tardy policies that are currently in effect for our common reference.

Once again we thank you for your partnership in maintaining our students focus on learning.

***Steve Lobban***

***Pam Farrill***

***Beth Schaper***

***(PTO President's Corner, continued from page 1)***

The Media Center at Sherwood recently installed new shelving courtesy of PTO funds. The PTO contributed \$7,000 toward the cost of these shelves, and the difference is truly noticeable. This shelving makes it easier for our Sherwood students to access books and display their work. Curriculum Coordinator, Anne Wentzell, shared a proposal with the PTO for Resource Carts, and requested the PTO purchase one of the four resource carts that were needed. With the assistance of Dan Costello, the PTO was able to fund all four, an investment in excess of \$4,500.

Robert Pottle, a children's poet, recently gave poetry presentations to 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> graders. His wit and humor were well received by the students, and the PTO was pleased to fund his visit to Shrewsbury.

Sherwood will be acquiring a digital marquee sign to use at school for announcements and communications. The PTO has allocated approximately \$2,500 for this sign.

The Oak Middle School Teachers were treated to a Holiday luncheon funded by the PTO. Dr. Lobban recommended and orchestrated this

event to emphasize the appreciation of his staff for making student learning “priority number one.” As the construction comes to an end, the Oak Middle School Administration is determining how to best utilize the PTO funds still available to them. Over the next few months, PTO programs and materials will start to appear at Oak as the construction workers disappear!

There are many PTO events still planned for the second half of the year, including the Magazine Drive in March. I would ask each of you to support this effort by renewing, adding, or starting a magazine subscription for yourself, a relative, or a friend. The money that we make goes right to your children in the form of learning aids, materials and events.

Finally, the PTO is gearing up for elections in April. Giving your time and effort is an investment loaded with benefits. The current PTO Executive Board has enjoyed the relationships and open communication with the School Administration, the ability to fund programs, and the honor of being part of a progressive and leading school district. Plan to get involved!

Thanks again to all of the parents, staff and administration who have made the first half of the year a success.

***Michael Brand***  
***PTO President***

### **PTO News**

#### **Magazine Drive (Please Save your Renewals)**

The next major fundraiser for the Oak and Sherwood Middle Schools will be the annual Magazine Drive in March of 2005. We are asking everyone to save their magazine renewals and/or new subscriptions and support this fundraiser by ordering them through the school in March. Thank you.

### **School Council News**

The OMS Council met last on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at the Oak Middle School! It was our first meeting at the school this year. The Council completed a “preview of coming attractions” walkthrough of the facility, discussed the Grade 7 math pre-assessment initiative and the “Learning How to Learn” program. The Council next meets on Wednesday, February 2 at 6:30 P.M. in the Oak Middle School Media Center. Current issues as well as review and recommendations related to the “Respectful Community” portion of the School Improvement plan will be addressed.

### **Nurse's Notes- January 2005**

Dear Oak Middle School Parents,

#### **A Few Words About Breakfast...**

For most families, mine included, weekday mornings are a hectic time. Once the alarm clock goes off, it's a mad dash to the bathroom to get ready and just enough time to sort out briefcases and backpacks and sprint to the bus stop. However, regardless of hectic mornings, eating a healthy breakfast is the single most important thing a child should do before heading to school.

Eating a healthy breakfast helps kids concentrate in school. Studies show that children who eat breakfast are more alert and creative and perform better on tests. They also have greater memory retention and more motivation to solve complicated problems.

Some kids skip breakfast because they sleep too late. Others think it is a way to stay thin. To the contrary, eating a healthy breakfast jumpstarts the metabolism for the day. Kids who skip breakfast tend to overeat at lunch and consume more calories throughout the day. Studies show that kids who skip breakfast get less iron in their diets and are more likely to have a higher Body Mass Index (BMI), which is a sign they may be overweight.

Just like with other meals, breakfast should include a variety of foods such as grains (breads, cereals), protein (meats, beans, and nuts), fruits and vegetables, and dairy (milk, cheese and yogurt). Low sugar, high fiber cereal will regulate blood sugar levels. High sugar cereals tend to cause a peak and then drop in blood sugar, as a result your child will feel hungry and tired. Proteins and complex carbohydrates stick with the body longer and provide energy for daily activities and make a person feel satisfied for a longer period of time.

A final thought...breakfast is always available here at school. For \$1.25, kids can choose from a variety of yogurts, bagels, muffins, cereals, milk and juice. There is also the free and reduced breakfast/lunch program for those who qualify. I will be putting some healthy breakfast recipes in the Oak Street Journal (the student newspaper) so kids can get involved in making their own breakfast.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (508) 841-1204.

**Lee-Anne Saccone, MSN, RN**  
**(508) 841-1204**

### **The Home-School Connection**



### **Attend a Parent Workshop Sponsored by Your PTO!**

Dear Parents of Shrewsbury Students,

You are invited to attend the next free workshop in the Pre K – 12 PTO sponsored parent workshop series.

**What:** Overcoming Underachieving

**When:** Wed, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 to 8:30p.m.

**Where:** Floral Street School, Media Center

**Presenters:** Gretchen Stoddard: Learning center teacher, Floral Street School and Margaret Welch: Reading and curriculum specialist, Floral Street School

The workshop will focus on student motivation, empathetic listening and homework strategies.

### **The topics will include:**

📌 Strategies we have all tried and why they don't work.

📌 7 effective homework strategies.

📌 Effective communication strategies for parent--empathetic listening, constructive sentence starters

If possible, please RSVP at 508-841-8300 ext. 4220 by phone or email me at [lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:lbuxamusa@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us). When leaving a message, please include your name and phone number. If you cannot send an RSVP, please do not hesitate to still attend. We would love to see you!

**IMPORTANT:** If Shrewsbury Public Schools are closed that day due to inclement weather conditions, the workshop will be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on the local educational cable channel (SETV-34).

**Loubaina Buxamusa**  
**Program Coordinator**

### **"Students Shine"**

Congratulations to the following team winners of the **National Geographic Bee:**

Matt Kaminsky	Annie Moriondo
Paul Trotta	Sunanda Sharma
Shirley Doan	Nathan Richardson
Melissa Williams	Alex Chadwick
Carter Stevens	Michael Canning

Congratulations to the Oak Middle School Champion!!! **Annie Moriondo**

The following students will be competing in a **Math Counts** competition on Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Lisa Liu	Anant Garg
Matt Graves	Ruby Lee
Allan Hemdal	Ayoung Kim
Saketh Kalathur	Rachel Snook
Madhavi Duvvuri	Shirley Doan
Aaron King	Chiyu Ren
Vickash Mohanka	Raca Banerjee
Elaine Xie	Derek Huang
Alyssa Carelli	Priyasha Chaturvedi
Erica Wong	Eric Gajnak
Tara Raj	Ajay Dhesjkan
Lisha Xu	Timofey Trubko
Alex Tang	Apoorva Trivedi
Sana Majid	Sahil Jain
David Fowler	Rahul Jaswaney
Alex Marshall	Nirmal Devarajan
Victoria Wang	

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### National Current Events League Results

#### Grade 7

Hanzhi Zhu	Charlie Long
Scott Goodwin	Greg George
Jackson Maher	Manny Maminakis
Nick Reposa	Sunanda Sharma
Annie Moriondo	Anthony Panarelli

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A **Jazz Band** consisting of students from Shrewsbury High School and Oak Middle School has been selected by the Massachusetts Music Educator's Association to perform a casual concert at the 2005 Massachusetts Music Educator's Association All-State Conference. The students, Ariel Wexler, Yoel Wexler, Adrian Sealy, and Kazumi Shimokawa will perform jazz standards and original material in a half-hour concert at the conference on March 18<sup>th</sup> in the lobby of the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. These students are exceptional musicians and will proudly represent the Music Department and the Shrewsbury Public Schools.

### "Student Success" Presentation

Here are the times and dates the "Student Success" presentation will recablecast on SETV channel 34. It can be seen for the next four weeks at the following times.

**"Student Success: What Schools and Family Can Do"** A Presentation by Dr. Robert Evans a clinical and organizational psychologist.

Fridays at 4pm  
 Saturdays at 1pm, 9pm  
 Sundays at 1pm, 4pm, 9pm

### Concert

Come and join us for an evening of enchanting music with **Anthony Kearns**, one of the world renowned Irish Tenors. Anthony Kearns is a true lyric tenor. He has incredible agility and flexibility of voice and the ability to color notes gracefully and beautifully.

When: **March 6, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.**  
 Where: **Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA.**

**TICKETS ARE NOW ON SALE:** call 508-752-0888 or visit [www.mechanicshall.org](http://www.mechanicshall.org) or <http://www.stmarysparish.org/kearns/>  
 \$45.00, \$55.00, and \$99.00 VIP!

**Meet Mr. Kearns** after the concert for an additional \$25 per person, in addition to concert tickets.